



Montana

Department of Labor and Industry

Commissioner's Office

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(HELENA) --- UNEMPLOYMENT RATE 4.4%

(HELENA) --- Following the national rate, Montana's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased by 0.4% in August to 4.4%. The national rate increased by 0.4% from 5.7% to 6.1% for August.

"Although Montana is still fairing better than the rest of the country, this month's figures show that, like surrounding states, Montana's economy is still impacted by the national economic troubles," says Labor Commissioner Keith Kelly. "We aren't immune to the trickle down effect the mortgage crisis is having on the rest of the country. Agricultural workers and self-employed workers in the construction and timber industries are being affected. Despite these factors, Montana still saw continued growth in payroll jobs."

Seasonally adjusted non-farm payroll employment increased by 3,300 over the last month. However, the total number of Montanans who are working, including agricultural and self-employed workers, decreased by 1,724 jobs on a seasonally adjusted basis.

Prices, as measured by the seasonally adjusted consumer price index (CPI-U), posted a small deflation for the month of August. The CPI-U decreased by 0.1 percent because of a 3.1 percent decrease in energy prices over the month. The price levels for all items less food and energy, also called core inflation, slowed to 0.2 percent.

All of the surrounding states also showed increases in the unemployment rate. Idaho showed the greatest increase of 0.5%, increasing to 4.6%. Wyoming's and South Dakota's rates each increased by 0.3%. North Dakota's rate increased to 3.6%.

Of all the regional states, including Montana, Idaho has shown the greatest increase in their unemployment rate since the start of the year, increasing by 1.8% since January. Montana and Wyoming have both increased by 1.2% since January.

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**Unemployment figures are seasonally-adjusted. Seasonally-adjusted numbers remove the effects of events that follow a more or less regular month-to-month pattern each year. These adjustments make nonseasonal patterns easier to identify. The margin of error for the unemployment rate is plus or minus 0.8 percentage points at the 90 percent confidence level. All questions relating to the calculation of unemployment rates should be directed to the Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Research and Analysis Bureau.*

The September 2008 Labor Situation Report will be released on Friday, October 17, 2008.

******* INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET *******

Monthly labor force information for Montana counties are available at:

<http://www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/cgi/dataanalysis/?PAGEID=94&SUBID=205>

Monthly Montana industry employment information is available at:

<http://www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/cgi/dataanalysis/?PAGEID=94&SUBID=199>

Annual labor force data for Indian Reservations in Montana are available at:

www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/?PAGEID=67&SUBID=121